

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS AMMAN 006883

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [LE](#) [IZ](#) [SU](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: U.S.-BASHING LEAVES REGIONAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS
LITTLE TIME TO DISCUSS LABOR ISSUES

[1](#)1. Summary: Trade Union leaders from across the region used a conference in Amman to denounce U.S. foreign policy. One of the few real labor issues raised was a dispute with the Anglo-Dutch firm Unilever. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. The General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU) held its Fifth General Congress on August 14 and 15. The opening session featured speeches from the leaders of visiting trade unions including the President of the Arab Federation of Trade Unions, and representatives from Egyptian, Tunisian, and Chinese trade unions. The concurrent theme in all of the opening remarks, with the exception of the Chinese representative's, was a familiar denunciation of American policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. The speakers each expressed support for the Palestinian Intifada, and for Lebanese and Syrian "struggles" against Israel, including for the Shaba' Farms. They also called for an end to "American occupation" in Iraq and vowed their support for the Sudanese government against the "British-American conspiracy" over Darfur. None of the speakers provided any substantive remarks about labor or economic policy in Jordan. Minister of Labor Amjad Majali provided a brief keynote speech, devoid of foreign policy views, promising cooperation with the GFJTU and Jordan's seventeen labor unions.

[1](#)3. The only clear statement on a labor issue during the congress was made by the Petrochemical Trade Union of Jordan. The union organized a demonstration of between 50 and 100 people in front of Amman's Jerusalem Hotel where the congress was taking place. The protesters carried banners in Arabic and English decrying the termination of agreements between Unilever and Jordan's publicly-held Industrial Commercial & Agricultural Co. LTD. (ICA). According to the Petrochemical Trade Union President, Khaled Al-Zyoud, the consequences of the Unilever decision will be a loss of 70 million JD (100 million USD) and between 500 to 750 jobs. Interestingly, Al-Zyoud, organized the protest without the knowledge of the GFJTU. Al-Zyoud is recognized as one of the more aggressive labor leaders in Jordan according to contacts in the labor unions. The ICA took out a full-page paid advertisement in the August 15 English-language Jordan Times airing their grievances against Unilever. The dispute has been ongoing since 2001.

HALE